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Mahathir-silat

ENROL MORE YOUTH MEMBERS, MAHATHIR TELLS MARTIAL ARTS GROUPS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants local organisations promoting art of self-defence to enrol more youth in their activities as one way to keep teenagers away from social ills.

Silat, the Malay art of self-defence, he said, inculcates religious knowledge, self-discipline, resilience, teamwork and self-confidence.

But towards that end, he said, such organisations, including the National Silat Federation (Pesaka, should first identify reasons for the poor participation by youth in self-defence art.

Dr Mahathir said this in a souvenir programme message for the triennial 1997 World Silat Championship opened by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Jaafar here tonight.

The prime minister also called for the promotion of self-defence art among students not only to ensure preservation of a national cultural heritage but also to create a next generation strong in character and formidable in facing challenges.

Pesaka is jointly organising the championship, the ninth so far, with the International Silat federation (PERSILAT).

More than 400 silat exponents from 24 countries are taking part in the eight-day meet at Stadium Negara here.

Organising chairman and Pesaka deputy president Abdul Rahman Hassan said the championship was aimed at encouraging society to appreciate the recognition of silat as the a national self-defence art.

The first championship was held in Jakarta in 1982.

Silat is one of the medal events for SEA Games, the region's biggest sporting event.-- BERNAMA

RS RN